the Alliance Weekly

DECEMBER 11, 1957

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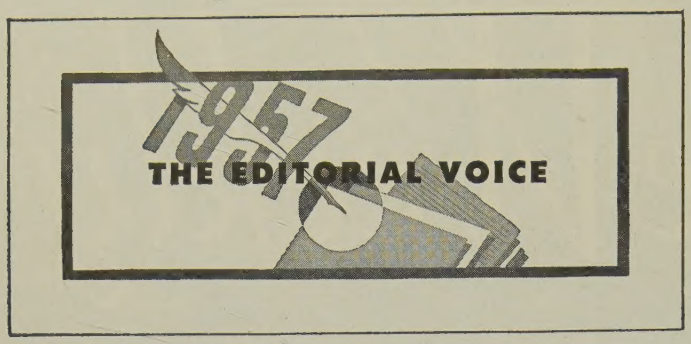


EATING THE LOCOWEED

In the western United States there grows a plant called the locoweed. It looks like a fern and bears the horrendous botanical name of *astragalus mollissimus.*

This plant is poisonous to cattle and when eaten by a steer has the effect of shorting the wires in the poor beast's nervous system, upsetting his equilibrium, destroying his muscular coördination and throwing his eyes out of focus so that he may shy away from the smallest object or misjudge the size of a large object and walk right into the side of a cliff.

So I am reliably informed; but since the locoweed is quite obviously outside my field of interest, or at least my sphere of responsibility, I would just skip the whole thing except that it points straight to another and more serious matter which is certainly of critical interest to me. I refer to sin and its effect upon people.

When a steer begins to stagger around after eating the locoweed the rancher knows something is wrong. The beast is not acting like himself. He is, in plain words, loco.

As we consider the potentials for moral greatness that God built into human nature when He made man in His own image; when we see how self-sacrificing and kind people are at their best moments; when we observe the innocent sweetness of a baby or the selfless, shining love of a mother we are scarcely prepared for the shock of reading history or scanning the daily newspaper.

That woman who stands with a smoking pistol in her hand over the body of her murdered husband—can that be the same woman whose face a few hours before was soft and radiant as she nursed her baby at her breast? That boy who plunges a switchblade into the heart of a kid from another part of town—can that be the same boy who before he left the house to join the gang on the corner spent half an hour romping with his little sister or affectionately teasing his mother? That young man who sits grim-faced and silent in the death house awaiting the hour when he must pay for his crimes against the human race—is that the same young man who a few months ago lay face down across the bed and sobbed because a plain little dog he loved had been killed by a car?

While the life of the ordinary person is not so dramatic and violent as those of the persons cited here, his conduct is nevertheless fully as contradictory. He blows hot and cold from day to day; he is kind and cruel, chaste and lustful, honest and deceitful, generous and covetous; he longs to be good and chooses to be evil, yearns to know God and turns his back upon Him, hopes for heaven and heads toward hell. He is morally loco.

Sin is a poisonous weed that throws the whole nature out of order. The inner life disintegrates; the flesh lusts after forbidden pleasures; the moral judgment is distorted so that often good appears evil and evil good; time is chosen over eternity, earth over heaven and death over life.

This in large measure accounts for the vivid and colorful language employed by the prophets and apostles to describe the effects of sin. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." This is a sample from Isaiah. A dozen pages of quotations equally as strong could be taken from the other prophets and psalmists.

The New Testament is generally thought to be milder than the Old, but we have only to read Christ's indictment of the Pharisees to discover how wrong such a notion is. Peter, John and Jude dip their pens in liquid fire to do justice to the blazing wrath of God against sin, while Paul traces the serpentine path of sin through the human system and proves how confused and morally self-contradictory the heart is that has not been separated from its iniquity.

We must be careful, however, that we do not push our illustration so far as to create the impression that sin is an accident, a disease, a poison unintentionally imbibed. If sin is a disease it is like alcoholism, one that is chosen, bought and voluntarily swallowed. A steer is not responsible for poisoning himself on locoweed, but men are endowed with intelligence and ability to distinguish good from evil; they are therefore not to be excused either for their sin or for the terrible results of it.

Men are indeed accountable for their sins, and their responsibility is twofold. First they are morally obligated to choose the good and reject the evil, and they will be brought to severe and certain judgment for their failure to do it.

Secondly, since God has in Christ provided a cure, they are responsible to humble themselves and seek forgiveness and cleansing at the fountain opened for all men by the hard dying of Jesus Christ on the Roman cross.

"If any man will," said Jesus, and in so saying swept away all excuses and made every man accountable for his future as well as for his past. For in spite of what sin has done to us we are yet able to exercise a choice unto eternal life; and we are responsible for our choice whether it be right or wrong.

●

The end of learning is to know God, and out of that knowledge to love Him and imitate Him.—JOHN MILTON

What Makes a Man Great?

By REV. WILLIAM L. BERG

)HN the Baptist was a man "great the sight of the Lord" (Luke 5). Jesus said, "Among them that born of women there hath not en a greater than John the Bap-."

When quoting the angel's an-uncement to Zacharias we should phasize the words "in the sight the Lord," for that is where his atness was recognized. Anyone erested in like recognition will do ll to ponder the life of this man. however, your desire is to be at in the sight of men you will l little help or encouragement in biography of John the Baptist. here were certain elements in the of John that qualified him for high rating. Though we cannot in to mention them all in this rt space, we desire to call your ntion to a few.

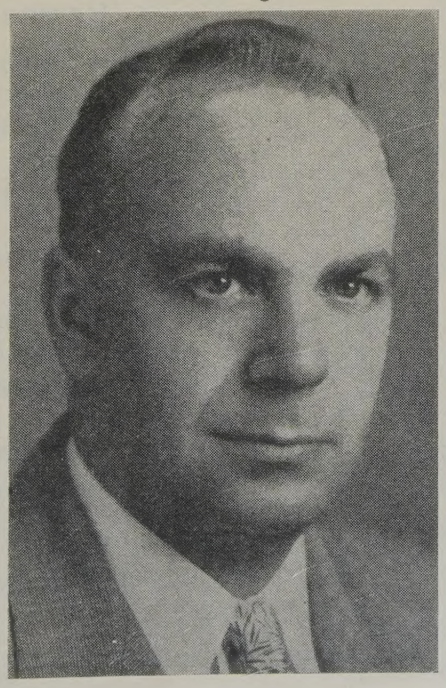
irst, John was a man of stability. conversation with some of John's ner disciples Jesus said concern-him, "What went ye out into the lerness to see? A reed shaken with wind?" This question needed no wer, for they were all familiar h the character of John. He was illar, a Gibraltar that stood un-ed by all the winds that raged nst him. He was not a double-ded man. The Word of God to was not "yea and nay" but "yea Amen." He burned with con-ion and courage. Right was t and wrong was wrong.

hn never altered the truth for sake of personal convenience. undaunted courage reached its ax when he stood before King od and rebuked him for having rother Philip's wife (Matt. 14: Although this was to cost him ead, yet he never wavered from truth.

is should be a lesson, primarily, to every prophet of God. A Christian editor said, "A man who is forced to preach in order to save himself always makes a fervent preacher. A man called to the ministry without a feeling that he is under compulsion to pit himself against the spirit of his age will never make a great preacher. If a man is driven within his own heart to resist the spirit of the age which violates his own sense of right, he resists; and in resisting cries out against that which he sees is not only ruining others but threatens to wreck himself. Preachers are made by the developing of their power of moral resistance against the spirit of the age."

This spirit of firmness in John was not clothed with the garments of obstinacy and rudeness, but rather was clothed with humility and gentleness. A strong spirit of conviction must be thus manifested, for it is the spirit of Christ.

Mr. Berg



Second, John was a man who rose high above the love for earthly goods. Jesus again said, "But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment?" You would have to go to the king's court to find such. This John had his coat of camel's hair, with a leathern girdle about his loins; his diet was locusts and wild honey (Matt. 3:4). A man of God will be judged by his attitude toward the things of this world. John could have lived a comfortable life with the ample provisions of a priestly family, but he chose to go into the wilderness. In his clothes, in his food and in his dwelling he rose far above the mere appeals of the flesh. His aim was to glorify God, and such a life demands discipline and self-denial.

The Bible meaning of self-denial is not merely denying the flesh a few luxuries; it is complete death to the flesh. It is saying "no" to all its whims and fancies. It is a complete refusal to be governed by its wants and wishes. Such an attitude sets a man completely free to do the will of God. This was the spirit of John the Baptist and is the spirit of all men "great in the sight of the Lord." If a man's ambition is to accumulate as large a portion as possible of this world's goods for himself he can never be thus rated.

"There is no power on earth like the power of a holy, consecrated life. There is hope for any nation when its young men have something of John's spirit. When they discipline the body until it becomes a ready instrument of God, fearless of hardships. When their understandings are sharpened to know what is most

Mr. Berg is an Alliance missionary in the Philippine Islands, now stationed in Digos, Davao, where he works among both Cristianos and pagans.

needed by man and are able to detect the weakness and vices of society, and to bear the burden of their time."

Third, John had a great zeal for righteousness. Jesus said, "He was a burning and a shining light" (John 5:35). "He was the lamp that burned and shone" (Weymouth). Righteousness was his main passion. Righteousness was the governing influence of his own life and he demanded the same fruits from all who were partakers of his baptism. He had no use for religion that was full of forms and traditions but devoid of heart righteousness. It is not easy to maintain a standard of righteousness in a world that is crooked and perverse, but John did. It is this element of righteousness that sets a man apart and makes him to shine as a light in the darkness. Robert Murray McCheyne, one of Scotland's greatest saints and preachers, said, "Above everything else my people need me to be a holy man." We can say with equal truth and urgency, "My neighbors desperately need to see me as a holy person."

"He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," said John concerning Jesus. Jesus came to baptize men with the Holy Ghost and fire. To be thus baptized is to be aflame with the Spirit of Christ. It is to have imparted into one's life the very heart and mind and life of Christ. Our hearts ought to burn with the same zeal for righteousness which characterized our Master. We should have the same devotion to God and the same love for lost men. Without that fire there is little reason to believe that a man has been baptized with the Holy Ghost. This spirit of burning is one of the major elements in the life of any great man. This is the great distinguishing feature among men. Any man with a burning heart will be recognized as a commissioned messenger of heaven.

Fourth, John was humble and self-effacing. Before Christ his attitude was "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Though he had many opportunities to acknowledge himself as someone other than he was, he never yielded to this temptation. He was content to be "the voice of one crying in the wilderness." He was not the Bridegroom but the friend of the Bridegroom. His part was to ask the hand of the Bride and to arrange the marriage. To see that Bride happily joined to the Bridegroom was his great joy and delight. He could with a full heart, free from all jealousy, point his own disciples to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29, 36, 37), and rejoice as they left him to follow Christ. He considered that he was not worthy to unloose Jesus' shoes. He maintained utter submission to Him who alone is worthy to receive glory and honor. "He loved men so well that he rejoiced when he saw them forsake him to follow Christ. He loved Christ so well that to see Him honored was the crown of his life." He knew that a "man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven" (John 3:27). Thomas à Kempis said, "He is truly great who is small in his own sight and thinks nothing of the giddy heights of worldly honor."

In spite of the great epitaph written over the life of John, Jesus said, "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven" may be greater than John. To us is given the privilege of having the very person of Christ dwelling within us, living out through us His life. These elements of character which make for greatness "in the sight of the Lord" are simply the essence of Christ's life and are through His Person, obtainable to every man. Coöperate with God in His plan and purpose to make you such a one, and believe that "he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ" (A.S.V.). ◆ ◆ ◆

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Hosanna! Lord!

Hosanna to the living Lord!
Hosanna to th' Incarnate Word!
To Christ, Creator, Saviour, King,
Let earth, let heaven, Hosanna sing!
HOSANNA! LORD! HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST!

Hosanna, Lord! Thine angels cry;
Hosanna, Lord! Thy saints reply;
Above, beneath us, and around,
The dead and living swell the sound
HOSANNA! LORD! HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST!

So, in the last and dreadful day,
When earth and heaven shall melt away,
Thy flock, redeemed from sinful stain,
Shall swell the sound of praise again:
HOSANNA! LORD! HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST!

—REGINALD HEBER.

The Master Secrets of Prayer

V. *How to Pray*

By CAMERON V. THOMPSON

THE prayers of our Lord Jesus Christ produced the greatest astonishment and desire in the hearts of the disciples. "And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1). When God the Son talked to God the Father in the mighty power of God the Holy Spirit, it was an event that stirred the disciples more than all His miracles previous to the crucifixion and resurrection.

If the Son of God found prayer necessary in His life, what place do you think it should have in ours? His disciples, who never asked to be taught to preach, begged that He would teach them to pray. And it is hinted that John the Baptist was not only the mightiest of the prophets but was, also, mighty in prayer and in teaching men to pray.

On earth our Lord "took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering" (Luke 9:28, 29). And in heaven He continues to pray: "When he had by himself purged our sins, (he) sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; . . . Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 1: 3; 7:25).

Christ lived on earth for about thirty-three and a half years. He taught and healed and preached for about three and a half years. He has been praying for us for nearly two thousand years!

Let us then be perpetual students in the school of prayer; let us enjoy the courts of His majesty, making full use of the rent veil and the blood-bought way; let us draw near to a God who has the answer to our every physical, mental and spiritual need. Let us learn how to pray from the Bible.

Sixteen Mighty Laws of Prayer

1. *Our prayers should be persistent.* God's delays are not denials. Each day brings the answers to our prayers nearer. The church has, for instance, been praying for nearly two thousand years the last prayer of the Bible, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). Yet we are not discouraged for we know that any moment may see the flaming of His advent feet. Moses prayed that he might "go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan" (Deut. 3:25), and God answered, "Speak no more unto me of this matter." But the Lord did not say, "No," and centuries later we find Moses in the land talking with our blessed Lord (Luke 9:30).

At a meeting in a small town in the United States a very old man was converted. Another old man stepped forward and with tears told how fifty years earlier twenty-five young people had made a pledge to pray for this man every day. Said he, "I am the only one still living to see the prayers of fifty years answered." If it be for God's glory and according to His will (and He will show you in due time if it is), then just keep on praying until light breaks through and you can praise, or until the answer comes.

The author prayed for over twenty years that he might see well enough to drive an automobile at night, and in his forty-second year this prayer was answered. "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18: 1). A literal translation of a famous verse will thrill our hearts: "And I say unto you, Keep on asking and it shall be given you; keep on seeking, and ye shall find; ever continue knocking, and it shall be opened unto you" (Luke 11:9).

To learn of those who persisted patiently and relentlessly in prayer, read of the man who would not give up at midnight (Luke 11:5-8), the man who refused to stop crying out (Mark 10:46-52), the widow who wore out a judge with her pleading (Luke 18:1-8), and the woman who had an answer for every objection of God and man (Matt. 15:21-28).

At times our Lord will wait much later than we think He should to answer our prayers. He came to the disciples on the lake at the fourth watch of the night. But just as the sun rises exactly when it is due, so our Lord is never really late. I have in my files many dozens of answers to prayer marked "LMD." It is the largest file I have. "LMD" means "Last Minute Deliverances."

2. *Our prayers should be insistent.* There comes a time, in spite of our soft, modern ways, when we must be desperate in prayer, when we must wrestle, when we must be outspoken, shameless and importunate. Many of the prayers recorded in Scripture are "cries," and the Hebrew and Greek words are very strong. Despite opinions to the contrary, the Bible recognizes such a thing as storming heaven—"praying through." "The fervent prayer of a righteous man is mighty in its working" (James 5:16, Greek). When Herod stretched forth his hands to vex the church (Acts 12), the church stretched out in prayer (verse 5).

"O God, Thou must do as Thou hast said!" is the cry of those who *must* have an answer, who cannot be denied. It is not that we overcome the reluctance of God; rather that we *take hold of His willingness,* plowing through principalities and powers, inviting His almighty power into our desperate needs. Lest we become proud because we think we have learned to pray, we should read, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death . . . was heard in

that he feared" (Heb. 5:7).

Read of the boldness of Abraham (Gen. 18:23-32), of Moses (Ex. 33: 12, 18), and then let us take heed to what has been called the most gracious of all invitations to prayer: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us *therefore* come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:15, 16).

3. *We must resist in prayer.* We have a terrible enemy who knows that prayer is his undoing. If Satan had ten atomic bombs and freedom to use them, he would drop them on the ten most effective prayer chambers in the world. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in the heavenlies" (Eph. 6:12).

We have an enemy who will send late hours so that we cannot have early rising, who will substitute the good for the best, who will let us feast on one answer to prayer too long so that we shall not think to get another. He will even let us take courses in prayer and read books on prayer, so long as we do not pray. He is quick to point out the apparent failure of God to answer some prayer. He loves to center our attention on the rut we are in, to tell us of the impossibility of our petition being granted, causing us to forget that we have a God who begins with the impossible and goes on from there.

God never discouraged anyone; you can be sure that all—*all*—discouragement is from the devil. He distracts our attention from the resistless name of Christ to our own unworthiness. He is master of the telephone, causes the baby to cry, provokes the dog and brings useless visitors. He can pour a smoke screen of evil and foul thoughts into the midst of a beautiful supplication. He turns our attention from the majesty of God to the aches and woes of our bodies. He explains away all answers to prayer, if given a chance, and slanders both God and the brethren.

Satan's greatest trick is to get us into a direct fight with himself, thus bypassing Christ. His influence is apparent in all books which magnify his power and ignore his defeat, though they are supposedly designed to instruct us how to resist him. He has the church to call committee meetings each night and cracks the whip behind the frenzied religious activity of the day, smiling all the time at the empty prayer chamber. He is the greatest of sidetrackers and time-consumers.

But our Lord gave us the one and only way to resist the devil—the sword of the Word of God. "He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. . . . Then the devil leaveth him" (Matt. 4:4, 11). (Note carefully the passages which tell us to watch: Hab. 2:1; Matt. 26: 40, 41; Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36; 1 Cor. 16:13; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5: 6; 2 Tim. 4:5; 1 Pet. 4:7.)

4. *We must let God work.* That is, we should not try to answer our own prayers, unless the Lord Himself should lead that way. Shall we take a sieve and try to make a passage through the Red Sea by bailing out the water, or shall we push at the walls of Jericho while marching round them? "Commit thy way unto ["roll thy way upon," marg.] the Lord; trust also in him; and *he* shall bring it to pass" (Psa. 37:5). "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, *I* will do it" (John 14:14).

Abraham asked God for a son (Gen. 15:2) and then tried to help God out by taking Hagar to be his wife (Gen. 16:1, 2), hearkening to the voice of Sarai, his wife, rather than the voice of God. How awful when we meddle with the plans of God and try to answer our own prayers! To this day the Arabs claim descent from Ishmael who came from Abraham's unholy alliance and they still vex the Jews who are descended from Isaac. Hands off the Ark!

Jacob prayed to be delivered from the hand of his brother Esau (Gen. 32:11) and then set out to appease him with goats and ewes and rams and camels and kine and bulls and asses. Utterly roll your petition upon God. If a man stood at the mailbox holding on to the corner of a letter, how long would it be before he would get an answer?

5. *Our prayers should be secret.* We should tell God alone our needs. If we spread our needs out before men we will get what men can do. If before God alone we tell them we will get exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think—we will get all God can do. When we tell others, we are in reality praying to them and not to God. There are no depressions nor summer slumps in heaven. We pray vertically to God, not horizontally to our fellows. Few indeed practice this master secret, but it is the only true faith—to tell God alone. "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet ["storehouse," Greek] and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:6).

If the matter is secret, how can we afford to tell others? The words "closet," "shut doors," and "in secret" seem to indicate, as far as human language can make the matter plain, that we are to tell God alone of our needs. Perhaps your failure to honor this mighty truth is the real reason God has not supplied all your needs and given you the desires of your heart. You have been looking to man instead of to Jesus. When God rewards you openly you can witness to one and all what He has done, being zealous to give Him the glory.

There is an oft repeated but nauseating saying to the effect that we are to "Tell God and tell God's people." Let us revise that to bring it into line with the Word of God: "Tell God your needs, and tell His people how He met them. And be sure that He gets all the glory." ◆ ◆ ◆

What Shall I Render to My God?

What shall I render to my God
For all His gifts to me?
Sing, heaven and earth, rejoice and praise
His glorious majesty.

O let me praise Thee while I live,
And praise Thee when I die,
And praise Thee when I rise again,
And to eternity.

Mysterious depths of endless love
Our admiration raise;
My God, Thy name exalted is
Above our highest praise.

—JOHN MASON.

DAVID R. ENLOW, Editor

AT HOME

NSSA conventions attract 7,000: More than 7,000 Sunday school workers registered for the twin Sunday school conventions in Los Angeles and Grand Rapids during October—3,263 in Los Angeles and 3,837 in Grand Rapids. This more than doubles the number reached by the convention in Chicago last year and nearly doubles the twin conventions of two years ago.

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New York City has 1,589 Protestant churches: There are 1,589 Protestant churches in New York City served by 1,498 clergymen, according to latest statistics released. Brooklyn has more houses of worship than any other of the five boroughs: 487 churches of 48 denominations served by 451 ministers. Manhattan comes a close second with 482 churches of 63 denominations and 460 ministers.

●

Canadian group to merge with Free Methodists: A plan under which the Holiness Movement Church of Canada will be merged with the Free Methodist Church of North America was approved by the board of administration of the latter body at Winona Lake, Ind. The Holiness group has a membership of about 1,000 in Canada and conducts work in Hong Kong, Brazil, Ireland and Egypt. The Egyptian affiliate embraces several thousand members.

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McAuley Mission celebrates eighty-fifth year: The McAuley Water Street Mission recently marked its eighty-fifth anniversary as an institution for rescuing alcoholics and other down-and-outers in a special service at the mission, 124 Water Street, New York. Participating in the services were Ludwig B. Amerding, superintendent; Hooker Talcott, president, and Edwin B. Wadsworth, a trustee.

●

Says laymen must save city churches: If the city church is to be saved it will have to be by the work of laymen, Dr. Francis W. McPeek told three hundred pastors, laymen and executives attending the first American Baptist Urban Convocation in Indianapolis, Ind. Dr. McPeek, executive director of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, said "no Protestant denomination can move fast enough or far enough to provide a professional ministry for all people."

ABROAD

Stockholm store employees hold services: A weekly twenty-minute religious service is held in Stockholm for some 2,700 employees of Nordiska Kompaniet—Sweden's largest department store. Every Thursday morning before the store opens for business the workers gather in a designated area and pray under the guidance of Rev. Allan Rosengren, a Lutheran clergyman known as "the city pastor."

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Swiss canton approves Protestant statutes: The parliament of the small, largely Roman Catholic Alpine canton of Schwyz, Switzerland, unanimously approved the statutes of the canton's six Protestant parishes. This meant completing steps initiated in July, 1955, when the cantonal government approved a constitutional amendment to give the Protestant parishes equal juridical, financial and other rights with Catholic parishes.

MISSIONS

Mission doctor killed by explosion in Africa: Sidney Robert Correll, medical missionary, gave his life for French West Africa on October 15. He suffered burns caused by a gasoline explosion on October 8 and was flown by helicopter out of Kenieba, station of the United World Mission, to Bamako, the medical center of the French government. There he went to be with the Lord.

PEOPLE

Texas newsman to get Baptist Press Award: Ellie Hopkins, of Longview, Tex., was named at Dallas to receive the 1957 Press Award of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The annual award is made for "outstanding contributions to Christianity through religious news reporting." Mr. Hopkins is vice-president of Carl Estes Publications which includes two daily newspapers, weeklies and magazines. He is a choir singer, Sunday school superintendent and a deacon in First Baptist Church of Longview.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Communists use sputniks in antireligious campaign: Russia's sputniks prove that "only science, not religion, can work miracles," the Sofia Radio said in the latest broadcast in its campaign against religious beliefs of Bulgarian workers. "However much you prayed it would not take you anywhere," the station said, "but the Soviet sputnik, fruit of Soviet science, can take you to the moon in the near future."

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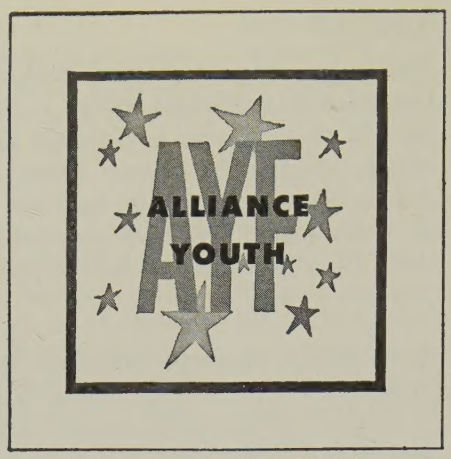
Communists say honest work, religion incompatible: The Sofia Radio in Communist Bulgaria broadcast the first of a series of talks it said was aimed at proving that "honest, productive work and religion are incompatible." The broadcast said that religious holy days, customs, rituals and pilgrimages to various shrines "are diverting thousands of people from their tasks and work." "This is inflicting great harm on the national economy," it added.



WELDON B. BLACKFORD, Editor

God at Work in a Small Filipino AYF

BY MRS. L. J. SKELLIE

Here in Katipunan, Zamboanga del Norte, Philippine Islands, there is a young people's group which would be considered very small in comparison to the large groups in America. There are only six members. However, God is beginning to work in the hearts of these young people and we praise the Holy Spirit, for He alone can change the character of these young Filipinos. We know you will rejoice with us in realizing that buds are beginning to form which we trust will later develop into blossoms and then into full fruit.

The course of study we have been pursuing for the last few months is the "Christian Character Course," by Keith L. Brooks. Before the next annual youth rally, to be held in Upi, Cotabato, one member will have successfully completed the work which will entitle him to a trip to the rally with all expenses paid. This is an exciting reward, for we are quite far from Upi. Each one is doing his best.

Four Christian young people live downstairs in our house and attend local schools. Three are in high school and one is in the sixth grade. One day some fruit which was to be sent to our children in Zamboanga City was left on top of our kitchen cabinet. One of the boys, who had been cleaning upstairs, went down the steps and into the back yard just as I stepped out on the porch. Looking over the porch railing, I saw this young fellow laughing guiltily and holding one of the fruits in his hand, giving it to one of the ladies. Knowing he must have taken the fruit from the top of the cabinet, I called to him and asked where he had gotten it. He looked up a little frightened and ashamed and told me. He shifted the blame to the young lady, saying that she had told him to get it.

Remembering how we had drilled so carefully on the chapter "Integrity" from our study book, I felt quite bad about this seemingly small deed. Had all the Scriptures and admonitions been in vain? My thoughts were troubled during the Sunday school and church service. I knew I must speak to the girl about this incident to determine if she were guilty or if the young man had told a lie.

Just as I was getting ready for the usual siesta in the afternoon a timid knock sounded on the bedroom door. I opened the door just a crack, only to have it instantly pushed open. In burst the accused young lady. With genuine tears and sobs of repentance she made her confession and asked forgiveness for doing such a foolish and wrong thing. All I could do was praise the Lord Jesus over and over! Of course, I welcomed her with arms of compassion and joy. We knelt together in prayer and cleared it all up!

A second incident involves the high school where the three young people attend. A few days ago a Sunday excursion was planned b the senior class. Two of our youn ladies are seniors, one being a mem ber of the student council. Goo times are few out here, especiall among Christian young people, an so the two Christian seniors wer tempted to go on the excursion. did not know anything about it.

On Sunday morning while w were in Sunday school a big bu carrying students who were shou ing and laughing stopped almo directly in front of the church. On young man went out and got i Our two senior girls just looked ou and smiled as they watched the bu drive off.

After we arrived home, I spok to the young lady who lives wit us about this trip. I learned that i was for her senior class. She tol me that when they were discussin the excursion she asked that it b on some other day and gave clea reasons why she would not go o Sunday. Then I realized that tw of our young people could have bee on that bus going off to spend th Lord's Day at a picnic on the beac but they chose to be true to the testimony and to the Lord Jesus.

This is another cause to believ that buds are forming, for thes young people are relatively ne Christians. They have not know anything about real separation an standing for the principles la down by our Lord.

So we rejoice and ask you to re joice with us in a young people group in this hard area which learning that it means a little mor to be a Christian than just to sa "Of course, I am a Christian—d you think I'm a pagan?"

The Bulletin Board

YOUTH RALLIES

BALTIMORE, MD. January 1; 2 and P.M. Speaker: Rev. Paris Reidhead, o New York City.

AYF Guide

Bible reading plan for school days

DECEMBER 16-20

Monday	Genesis 13
Tuesday	Psalm 12
Wednesday	Luke 2:39-52
Thursday	Psalm 59
Friday	Acts 7:42-60

When Guardian Spirits Failed

REV. RICHARD H. JOHNSTON, *Thailand*

Outside Tong Inn's village is an old gnarled *po* tree with a crude shelf leaning against its trunk. Two rough-ly carved wooden dolls stand on the shelf. These, Tong Inn said, were the guardian spirits of his village. When properly cared for and revered, they kept the villagers from sickness and danger.

The 150,000 members of the Kui tribe, among whom we work, are nominally Buddhists, but actually they are held under the domination of spirit worship as are most of the countrypeople of Northeast Thailand.

I first visited Tong Inn's village with another young man named Prasan. Tong Inn's thirteen-month-old daughter was ill with a stomach upset. It was small wonder, for at the time she was munching away on a green mango. The baby's milkless diet was odd: fish, rice and frogs! After a few hints on proper child care, I talked to the family about Jesus Christ. They seemed fascinated at the thought of One who actually had more power than their guardian spirits.

Two weeks later I visited Tong Inn's village again. This time Baby Samong was in serious condition and seemed more dead than alive. To appease the spirits the parents had made offerings to them and had fastened a number of greasy string bracelets on the child's spindly arms and legs. The atmosphere of death hung over Tong Inn's home that day, but in spite of this, he joined Prasan and me as we went into the forest to find six straight timbers for Prasan's new house. We had not gone far when Tong Inn turned and said, "Teacher, last time you visited my village you told about Jesus, who healed the sick, died for our sins and came back to life. You said He now wants to help us."

"Yes, I remember."

"Teacher, if that is true, would you please ask Jesus to heal my little Samong?"

I had to say, "No, Tong Inn, I cannot; you have already put your trust in the guardian spirits who are evil. Jesus will not work with them. That would be just like trying to mix light and darkness."

"Teacher, if that is the case, I will take the spirit strings off my baby. Then would you ask Jesus to heal her?" A prayer flashed from my heart, "Lord, what will I say?" The next instant I had freedom in answering him, "I'll be glad to pray for your little girl."

With this the subject changed; again we were searching for Prasan's timber. But I was afraid! What if the baby died? They would say, "Let's forget the foreigner's God and trust in the guardian spirits just as our parents and grandparents did." How could I ever preach the gospel effectively in that area again? News of this event would travel like wildfire through the tribe. Our work would be set back years! Doubts and fears gripped me until I followed David's example and prayed, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee."

Arriving at Tong Inn's home two hours later, I determined not to bring up the subject of Samong's condition or the request for prayer. If the parents renewed the request and proved their faith by cutting off all the spirit strings, I would pray for little Samong's complete healing and trust with the parents for a miracle of God's grace.

After a refreshing drink of sweet coconut milk we said good-by and started down the ladder, when suddenly Tong Inn called out, "Teacher, teacher! You have forgotten to pray for my baby!" He and his wife gravely talked over the problem for some minutes before she impulsively picked up the thin little form in her arms, and without hesitation bit off each spirit string, dropping them into the pigpen under the house.

Prasan, himself newly converted from spirit worship, became alarmed as he saw the spirit strings being disposed of in such a way. He knew better than I what would happen if Samong should die. He was afraid!

I placed the simple request before the Throne of Grace, leaving the whole thing for God to work out. He did! Within a week, Samong was eating ravenously, well on the way to complete recovery.

I wish the story might have ended there.

We had given Tong Inn a can of sweetened milk for the baby with complete instructions for mixing it. Two or three weeks later we again had occasion to go to Tong Inn's village. What a disappointment! Sa-

Country women in Thailand

W. W. CONLEY

mong was sick again, but with an entirely different illness; her grandfather was holding her, trying to tempt her appetite with a green guava. Had she eaten the sweet milk? Well, no, they had been too busy to mix it. I mixed a bowlful, and she ate hungrily as I fed her. We urged the mother to bring Samong and come to live at our home for a week or two so that we could oversee her diet until she was strong. But the parents were not willing.

Several days later I received word that the baby was very sick again. When I arrived at the village, Tong Inn, who speaks both Thai and Kui, was not at home. His wife could understand almost no Thai. I remarked that the baby again had spirit strings around her wrists and ankles, but I couldn't follow the mother's explanation. Again I urged her to bring the baby to our home for a week or so.

When I heard four or five days later that little Samong had died, I immediately went down to the village to talk to the parents. Tong Inn explained that an old man in the village had told them that their baby was being punished for sin in her previous life, and that if they didn't put the strings back again she would die. Again I had the chance to point out the futility of depending on the spirits, especially after the Lord had so definitely healed the little girl. "Teacher," said Tong Inn, "your God healed my baby, but when she got sick again with this new sickness, we were afraid of what the spirits would do."

We are sorry that little Samong died. But the death has caused many people to wonder about the power of the spirits they worship. We trust that the story is still unfinished; we pray that Tong Inn and his family, his neighbors and his friends, who have seen the power of God and the helplessness of spirits, may trust not only their bodies but their hearts to God. ◆ ◆ ◆

Ask of each subject presented to you, "How does it affect eternal life? Will it help or hinder my eternal happiness?" Such a test would solve most of our vexed questions. Let it be the rule of your life; try all things by it; make it your abiding thought.
—JEAN NICOLAS GROU.

D. EMARY

Travel in French Guinea means a ferry crossing as above

Are We Too Late?

By REV. MICHAEL KURLAK

French West Africa

More than thirty years ago our Mission talked of entering the Beyla district, where at that time the people were mostly pagan Maninkas. This area included in our responsibility has a population of over 145,000 people. That the Moslems have not been idle while we delayed is proved by this condensed report of a recent survey.

ARRIVING in Beyla on the afternoon of February 20, we put up at the new encampment. We learned that first evening that the commander there was a man we had known at Kankan a number of years ago. He was very cordial and gave us liberty to travel and preach anywhere in his district but told us we would find that 80 per cent of the people were Moslem.

We had prayed much about this survey, asking the Lord to lead us to the right places and to people who could help us get a true perspective of the situation with a view to opening a mission station in that large area. As far as we know, the gospel had never been preached anywhere in that district before our visit.

With us on the trip were two Africans, Timothy Fadamoudou and Woro. Timothy, a senior at the Telekoro Bible school, is himself a convert from Mohammedanism. His testimony and brief messages were the more effective for his having spent three years in a school of the Koran. Woro, a mature Guerz catechist, was invaluable to us bot as a preacher and interpreter. Th people of that district speak of them selves as Maninkas, but the languag is very different from that spoke around Kankan and we found difficult to make ourselves unde stood. Even Timothy, a pure-blooded Maninka from the Kankan distric could not understand everything tha was said to him. It was a blow t his pride when one woman declared after trying to make him unde stand, "I've never had stranger here before like these people wh don't understand Maninka!"

Our survey included visits t towns on all four main roads lead ing out of Beyla, two of which ar yet little more than bush road Again and again we were heard wit interest by people who admitted th truth of the gospel we presented bu informed us they were Moslems. I one important center boasting th largest market in French Guinea two hundred old men gathered an listened with close attention as w

xplained the way of salvation rough Christ. But we could see at they listened with the mental servation often registered on Mosm faces.

In order to reach one very large wn we traveled over a rough, ountainous trail but felt that the il of the road had been well orthwhile when about seven hunred people gathered and listened tently to the message. After we d finished, Timothy mixed with e crowd, as he often did, to hear eir reaction. Many of the words oken were true, they said, except ose about the way Jesus was born. od had no son, they assured each her; Mohammed was the only one ey should follow.

In Beyla itself we met and visited ith both the paramount and village iefs and arranged for an early orning meeting at the mosque. gain about two hundred people thered. They were, as Timothy ter described them, not just ordiry people but the elite of the wn, educated and wealthy. Many ere old men and wore the headress indicating that they had made e pilgrimage to Mecca. The men tened respectfully, some looking references in the Koran from me to time. When we had finished, e big Moslem teacher arose and gan to preach us a sermon, statg that he believed in Jesus as he d in Moses and the other prophets, t that they would accept no words hich could not be said with the oslem creed: "There is no God t God and Mohammed is his ophet." They were followers of ohammed and would remain so, declared, and the meeting broke . Before we left, several of the en shook hands with us and exessed appreciation of our visit. mothy said repeatedly that he d never seen such fanaticism in e Kankan area as he had seen at yla and in some of the towns in at area.

Only in the southern end of the strict did the people seem reonsive. They were Moslems but t as fanatical as those in Beyla. one town high in the mountains occupied the commander's enmpment, affording a view which rpasses anything we have seen in the Foutas. Three services were held there, and although no one made a move to accept Christ we felt that some would be willing to step out if they could have the witness over a period of time. Farther south in a Guerzé-Maninka town, the Guerzés were especially attentive and one old man, a brother of the Moslem chief, was definitely interested. In another large town, the center of the southern area, we had good attention and at the close of the meeting many asked intelligent questions about the way of salvation, though none moved to accept Christ.

We must confess that we concluded our survey with mingled feelings. We counted it a rare privilege to preach the Word to thousands who had never heard the story of Jesus, except perhaps in its distorted form in the Koran. And we pray that the Spirit will water the seed and cause it to bring forth fruit.

Yet our hearts were heavy as we left the district to return home. At the beginning of the trip we had the impression that we were going among pagan Maninkas. But we found that what were thought to be pagan areas had been invaded by Moslem teachers. Set as they are in their faith in the false prophet, the people will be doubly hard to win to Christ. But they must have at least an opportunity to accept the Saviour.

Will you pray about the opening of a station in this area? We are seeking the mind of the Lord of the harvest as to the opening of the work, the location of the station and the personnel needed. Pray ye therefore. ◆ ◆ ◆

A young Maninka girl at Kankan

M. E. BAER

African Graduates Face the Task

By MRS. R. JOSEPH ADAMS

Some of the graduates from the Bible school in Ntoroso, French West Africa, have been in training as many as six years. The course is designed to take four years. But every student is impressed that learning is not finished at commencement time. The years of service hold lessons to which he must bring the same diligent application that his studies required.

In their commencement messages the graduates all expressed their praise and gratitude to God for His faithfulness during their days in school. In every instance, however, the speaker stressed the vision upon his heart for the future.

One of them said, "Coupled with Christ's command to go is His promise to be with us. He will be true to His promise whether we are weak or strong, for God is always the same."

"We have found our war implements here in school," said another. "Now we go out to fight the enemy. The Word of Jesus, God's Son, and His resurrection is the message we take to the world. The fact that Christ rose from the dead and is now praying for us assures us of victory over the world until Jesus comes."

A young Bambara tribesman spoke on James 4:7-11. Said he: "If you go to the official of the district you must go by way of the guarded door. If you come to God it must be by His way and His method—with clean hands and a pure heart." He emphasized the importance of being right with God as the supreme requisite for service.

CLIFFORD E. HARROD, Reporter

News reports may be sent direct to Rev. C. E. Harrod, The Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, East and Lane Streets, Raleigh, N. C.

On Furlough

Mrs. N. H. Billings and children, Ralph, Anne, David and Constance, arrived in New York November 23 from French West Africa on emergency furlough necessitated by the illness of Constance. They will proceed to Cleveland, Ohio, to the home of Mrs. Billings' parents. Mr. Billings will continue his ministry in the Bible school at Bouaké until the conclusion of his term in March, 1958.

Rev. and Mrs. H. W. Catto arrived in San Francisco November 27 from New Guinea, having completed their first and second terms respectively. They have been stationed at Tigi Lake in the Wissel Lakes section.

Grant Hugh Crooks with Christ

An accident took the life of three-year-old Grant Hugh Crooks on November 15 in Bamako, French West Africa.

Rev. and Mrs. D. Grant Crooks and their two small children, Cathy and Grant Hugh, arrived in Africa November 13 after their furlough at home (ALLIANCE WEEKLY, November 13) and were at Bamako waiting to clear their goods through customs. In the late afternoon of November 15 all the missionaries were in back of the missionary house, Cathy sitting on the steps and little Grant Hugh on the ground about fifteen feet distant and about three feet in front of and on the right side of a truck which had been parked there for some time.

Mr. Crooks was in the town on business. Mrs. Crooks and other missionaries were to the rear and left of the truck. The driver entered the truck from the left side and not knowing that the child was in his path drove forward, the front wheel passing over him. He was immediately taken to the hospital, but within a few minutes he had gone to be with the Lord. The funeral was held in Bamako on Sunday, November 17, with several of the missionaries taking part. A trio of ladies sang "Jesus Loves Me," the little boy's favorite song.

Mr. and Mrs. Crooks have been appointed to open a new station among the Black Bobos. They wrote as follows: "It costs to take the gospel to the Black Bobos. Since the time when Christ poured out His life on the cross lives have been laid down to deliver that message 'into all the world' and to 'every creature.' Let us not think that simply because we live in this modern day the price that must be paid for the salvation of souls is any less than that which God, in His sovereign will, has always ordained. The full price may yet not be paid; but let us not falter but rather go forward on our knees, that there may be rejoicing in heaven over many Black Bobos who will have repented."

Marriage

Miss Marjorie Louise Landis, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. F. M. Landis of Coos Bay, Ore., was united in marriage to *Mr. David John Howard,* son of Rev. and Mrs. J. Harold Howard of San Francisco, Calif., on November 21.

New Church Dedicated at McKeesport

Sunday, November 24, brought a climax to a building program at The Christian and Missionary Alliance Church of McKeesport, Pa., with the dedication of the new edifice to the Lord.

This congregation took the first step of faith in June, 1955, in purchasing a large plot on Summitt Street. On October 24, 1956, ground was broken, with construction beginning immediately after. On May 5, 1957, Rev. C. F. Westover, the first pastor, was present for the laying of the cornerstone and on October 30, 1957, the first service was held in the new building.

Constructed of stone and brick, the building gives the impression of strength as well as beauty. Exposed laminated wood arches and a stone enclosed baptistry add to the beauty of the interior. The auditorium seats 600 persons. Sunday school facilities include twenty-one classrooms, and permit full departmentalization. A parking lot accommodates eighty cars. The church is valued at approximat $300,000.

A week of prededication servi were held from November 17 to with all the living former pastors spe ing at least once. Rev. D. C. Ko District Superintendent, was pres for the formal dedication service, h in the afternoon. The pastor of church is Rev. G. Edward Davis.

Annex Dedicated at New Castle, Pa

On October 20 in an afternoon ser the congregation of the Washing Union Church, New Castle, gathered to dedicate the new an which doubles the seating capacity the church and provides increased S day school facilities. Rev. J. G. Alli the pastor, writes that most of the la was provided by the men of the c gregation.

Preceding the special dedicat service Rev. Harold J. Sutton, ass ant superintendent of the West Pennsylvania District, held a series meetings, bringing timely and challe ing messages.

Harrison Church Refreshed

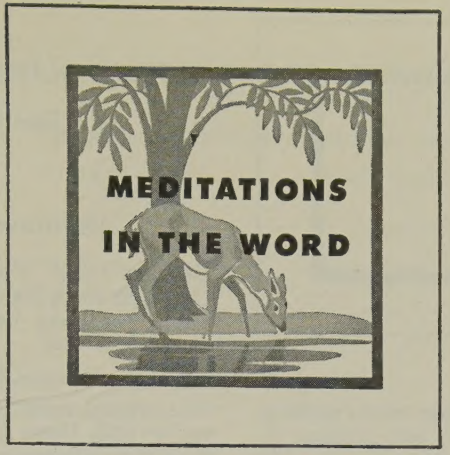
Rev. David M. Irvine, pastor of T Alliance Church in Harrison, Ohio, ports a season of spiritual refresh during special services held Octo 13 to 27 with Rev. and Mrs. Holmes Grove, of Pittsburgh, Pa. Two pers sought the Lord for salvation and m others sought the infilling of the Spi

Revival Comes to Niagara Falls, On

Much preparation in prayer prece the evangelistic campaign held rece ly in the Alliance church at Niag Falls, Ont., by Evangelist and M Clarence Shrier. The evangelist m istered under the anointing of the H Spirit and Jesus Christ was exalted every service as folk responded to call for salvation, rededication physical healing. Some sought for infilling of the Holy Spirit to live victoriously and serve with power. T pastor, Rev. Walter G. Pyster, wr that it was a taste of God-sent revi in answer to believing prayer.

(Continued on page

The Christian and Missionary Alliance, McKeesport, Pa.



Compiled by EDITH M. BEYERLE

Sunday

ADING—Matthew 11:20-30.
XT—*"Take my yoke upon you"* (verse).

A farmer's boy, after listening to an position of the beautiful promise, Iy yoke is easy, and my burden is ht," . . . said that his father always ed the ring in their yoke close to e end, and he put the short end of e yoke on the big ox and the long d on the weak one. The result was at the big one drew nearly all the id and the little one just walked along d sort of felt as if he were helping. iat is the sort of yoke Jesus puts on He takes the heavy end and lets have just enough to feel that we e in partnership. But the burden its on Him. Blessed partnership! essed Yokefellow! —A. B. SIMPSON.

ay for The Island World; Eastern, uth Pacific Districts, Mexico.

Monday

ADING—Hebrews 12:1-15.
XT—*"Let us lay aside every weight . . . and let us run with patience the ce that is set before us"* (verse 1).

Committal is the daily act of making rist the Lord of our lives. It means *mmitting to Him* and *being committed to Him.* A Christian's creed for ily living might be: "I have committed to Him my life, my eternal stiny, my all. The anxieties of each y, my physical needs, my spiritual nts, the highest dreams of life—all ese do I commit to Him. I am committed to Him: I have promised to ke Him Lord of my life. My task His task; it must be worthy of His me." An athlete must lay aside rsonal comfort and ease if he would ain the prize. So also must we lay de every burden and sin and run e race looking to Jesus, the Author d Perfecter of our faith. The church oves forward in direct proportion to e willingness of Christians to pay e cost of complete committal.— LECTED.

ay for India; Western Pennsylvania strict, Puerto Rico, Jewish Work.

Tuesday

ADING—Psalm 61.
XT—*"Lead me to the rock that is gher than I"* (verse 2).

When we are threatened by storms too rible for our puny strength to brave, nen disaster rolls like a mountain od upon our path, . . . when unling malice shoots poisonous darts our reputation, . . . then "lead me the rock that is higher than I." . . . apoleon, though intellectually a giant, eled and staggered like a tottering ant when he saw the hand of Province uplifted against him—when he ard the storms of retribution howling ound him. Then, though his will had vays been like iron, he became weak d infirm of purpose; he hesitated, olved, hesitated again, and finally fled—a melancholy spectacle of the helplessness of man when he dares the perils of life unprotected by the Rock that is higher than himself. His example is a lesson to all ages. It teaches every man to shun his proud habit of self-dependence, to learn the way to the shelter of the eternal Rock.—ERWIN HOUSE.

Pray for Africa; Western, Western Canadian, Southeastern Districts.

Wednesday

READING—Acts 16:1-11.
TEXT—*"After he had seen the vision"* (verse 10).

The path was veiled! The Master's will was hidden!
And further progress for the time was stayed:
But in good time he would again be bidden;
And waiting meantime, he was unafraid.

Then came that night, when maybe softly sleeping
The vision came—the clarion call to move—
And once again, with all in God's good keeping,
He could step forth, God's faithfulness to prove.
—J. DANSON SMITH.

Pray for Indo-China, Thailand; Northeastern, Eastern and Central Canadian Districts.

Thursday

READING—1 Peter 5:1-11.
TEXT—*"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you"* (verse 7).

There is no virtue in worry. It weakens the soul for its daily combat; it upsets the whole nervous system; it dissipates our energy; it freezes our fighting blood. Worry will make you unhappy; it helps to make life futile as well as fretful, unfruitful as well as unhappy, and it sends those who indulge in it to premature graves. Worry is largely a mental disease and, since it is, it can be cured by keeping your mind in proper channels. No human intellect can estimate the unutterable havoc and ruin wrought by worry. It has forced genius to do the work of mediocrity; it has caused more failures, more heartbreaks, more blasted hopes than any other one cause since the dawn of the world. No man can utilize his normal power who dissipates his nervous energy in useless anxiety. There is not a single redeeming feature about worry.—ANONYMOUS.

Pray for South America; Southwestern, Pacific Northwest Districts.

Friday

READING—Psalm 48.
TEXT—*"We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God"* (verse 9).

Had Israel done likewise after leaving Egypt and while journeying through the wilderness, an entirely different account could have been given to succeeding generations, and *us.* But instead of thinking of the great mercy and loving-kindness of their God who had delivered them from so great a bondage, they thought about the hardness of the way they traveled and the "leeks, and the onions, and the garlick" they had left behind! They would have been happier had they chosen different objects for contemplation. Leeks and garlic are good, but milk and honey are better. It was the loving-kindness of God that was leading them to the latter, but Israel failed to see it. God's purpose for them was Canaan, but they could get there only by leaving Egypt! God's purpose for us is to make us like His Son (Rom. 8:29), but He can do it only as He separates us from Egyptian "flesh."—PAMEH.

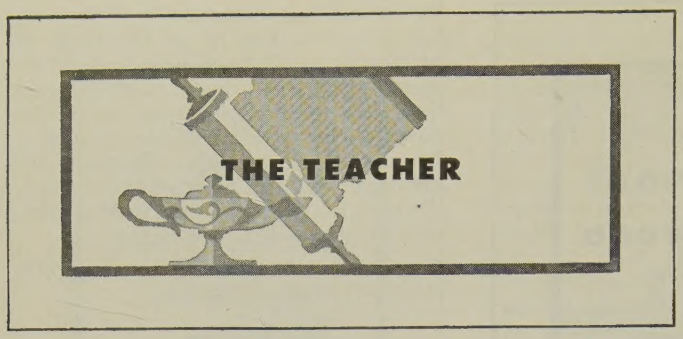
Pray for China, Hong Kong; Northwestern, New England Districts.

Saturday

READING—James 3:8-18.
TEXT—*"Shew out of a good conversation . . . works with meekness of wisdom"* (verse 13).

It is possible to be both truthful and tactful. A good doctor must be. If he examines a patient and finds a condition that needs operation, he will tell the patient so, but he will explain the situation in a kindly way to avoid shocking the patient. Many churches and other Christian organizations are suffering today from a lack of the right kind of frankness. One reason for the great strength of the societies founded by John and Charles Wesley was their boldness in dealing directly with the sins of unbelievers and believers, both in public and in private. But their motive was love for souls and their aim the glory of God. Today Christians talk too often *about* one another, and not enough *to* one another when they see things that are wrong. If such a thing is not worth talking about to the person who has done it, it is not worth talking about to someone else.—SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES.

Pray for Israel, Jordan, Syria; Central, South Atlantic Districts.



By DON J. KENYON

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON—DECEMBER 22, 195

The Wonder of the Incarnation

Philippians 2:1-11

DEVOTIONAL READING—Colossians 1:15-23

GOLDEN TEXT—*"But when the fulness of the time was com God sent forth his Son, . . . made under the law, to rede them that were under the law . . ."*—GALATIANS 4:4,

BACKGROUND AND LESSON ORIENTATION

The division of which Paul speaks in this lesson seems nothing more serious than a disagreement between two women in which there was a tendency of the church to take sides. It seems to have given occasion for the writing of one of the most exalted passages of the Scriptures on the subject of the Incarnation. To the Greek a living God and a dying man had nothing in common. In using the incarnation of Christ as an example of holy humility, Paul shows us His complete identification with man. He shows Him relinquishing the free use of His divine prerogatives in a life of self-abnegation and self-limitation that He might bring us into glory. The extent of His humiliation is a timeless example for all of us who may, even in a small way, tend toward self-exaltation.

CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

The context constitutes an interim entreaty. Paul hoped soo to be with them (1:25, 26). In the meantime he wante them to restore absolute unity among themselves with th true mind of Christ as their pattern. He certainly did n want them to be overwhelmed with the thought of impendin persecution. He taught them that suffering is part of th covenant agreement of the Christian disciple. They we to work out their salvation with sobriety and fear of failin God in anything. He pointed them to the power of Go who was at work in them. We must work with God or b guilty of moral treason against heaven. Their continue progress in obedience would be the test of Paul's own mi istry among them. Their failure would actually be an indic tion of his failure.

SIMPLIFIED OUTLINE

1. *The Spirit of Entreaty*—Philippians 2:1-4.
2. *The Mind of Christ*—Philippians 2:5-8.
3. *The Exaltation of Christ*—Philippians 2:9-11.

KEY WORD ANALYSIS

"Robbery"—*harpagmon* (v. 6). This word is controversial because of its latitude of meaning. Basically it meant robbery, but here such an idea is crude and void of significance. It may also mean a prize or a booty. The real question here is whether Paul is saying that equality with God was something to be gained or sought after or rather something already in the possession Christ. Commentators are divided c this. To this writer it speaks of a equality which Christ already possesse in relation to the Father and whic He was willing to relinquish in identif ing Himself with man. He did n cease to be God in becoming man b surrendered the free use of His divi power.

COMMENTARY ON THE PRINTED TEXT

1. *The Spirit of Entreaty* (Phil. 2:1-4).

This entreaty is based upon the virtues that ought to have been manifested among them as Christians. Granted that they did exist, they ought to have been a basis for producing the desired unity. The comfort and encouragement, the incentive of love and mercy ought to have united to bring about a harmony among them which would relieve the aged apostle of his concern for them. They ought by all standards to fill him full of the joy he would experience in knowing they were like-minded.

The militancy of the church ought to be directed against sin. There is no valid occasion for inward strife. Vainglory is non-Christian. Lowliness of mind is Christlikeness. Thinking only of ourselves or our circle breeds denominational pride and small thinking.

2. *The Mind of Christ* (Phil. 2:5-8).

The disposition which controlled the acts of the Incarnate Christ should also control His church. He was God of very God but was willing to leave His glory and take the full identity of mankind. He emptied Himself of the free use of His divine prerogatives. It was a self-limitation. He subjected Himself to the will of the Father in redemption. He assumed the place of a slave in His humiliation and subjected Himself in obedience to the Father to the point of death.

None of us has had to go to this extent in our obedience to God. The mind of Christ is a pattern for us all in clearing away the difficulties which come to us in our unwillingness to submit to the limitations placed on us in our relationships to others. We need only do as He did and our supposed "rights" vanish.

3. *The Exaltation of Christ* (Phil. 2:9-11).

The reference of this passage is to Jesus of Nazareth, the Incarnate God, who was exalted as Lord at the right hand of God. The name which is above every name is *Kurios*, Lord. At the name of the One who was the lowly Nazarene every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that He (Jesus) is *Lord*. As His own churc now volitionally acclaims Him such, will all creation acclaim Him wheth they desire to or not. There will com a time in the plan of God when the will be universal recognition of th Lordship of Jesus. Some people a willing to say nice things about Hi now but fall short of any declaratio of His Deity or Lordship. He is some a great teacher and an inspiri leader but He is not Lord. Some Paul's day looked on Him as Messia but not Lord.

Only the true Church witnessing b the Spirit is able so to declare Hi (1 Cor. 12:3). It is no light thing t make this declaration. Lip service do not meet the requirement. In the da that Paul here described, God sha declare Him to be Lord not only the redeemed but of the univers Every mouth will attest to it and eve knee will bow in recognition of it. H name shall be above all other name This will all be to the glory of Almight God, the prevailing motive of all divi acts. What a privilege to proclaim Hi so now and to do so willingly.

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This affords a new approach to the Christmas lesson. Instead of the traditional passages from the Gospels, this lesson directs our attention to the wonder and the meaning of the Incarnation. It is the deepest material in the New Testame for study. It will be hard to prepare but rewarding in i study. It is easy to become sentimental about Christma This is a lesson to stimulate humility.

THE ALLIANCE FAMILY

(Continued from page 12)

iverance Crusade at Lewistown

. William H. Lewellen, of Clymer, Y., conducted a Deliverance Cru- e in October at the Alliance church Lewistown, Pa. There was much itual blessing with divine healing ompanying the preaching of the rd.

he annual missionary convention held October 27 to November 3, king the seventh consecutive con- tion with a substantial increase in sionary giving, reports the pastor, . Wilberton C. Neff.

sonalia

ngelist Joel Winkler reports revival he Big Springs Community Church r Indianapolis, Ind., October 20 to vember 1, in answer to the cry to l of the congregation. He also stated t he has openings for services and be contacted at his new address, 1 Walnut St., McKeesport, Pa.

ssing Attends Rankin Meetings

sington Alliance Church, Buffalo, Y., rejoiced in blessings which at- ded the ministry of Rev. Hamilton Rankin during special meetings held ober 22 to November 3. God gave sual liberty and unction in the aching of the Word, and a number persons sought the Lord for salva- , including three Roman Catholics. eral were anointed and prayed for arding physical needs, some testify- later of deliverance.

he pastor, Rev. Charles Droppa, ibuted the time of unusual victory pecial nights of prayer. The pastor congregation plan to continue e periods of prayer for revival, ex- ting that God will answer in a con- ous visitation. Attendance has in- sed in all departments of the church ntly, with the missionary pledge eeding the $10,000 mark during the convention. "Our prayer is for a New Testament Church," the or writes.

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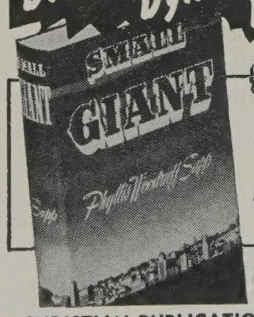

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To a Missionary

When you came to answer the heathen cry
And thought you would hear a piteous sigh,
You never expected this:
Man with a satisfied, comfortable air,
Women too busy with gossip to care
For a truth they do not miss.

Did you dream of a host of upraised arms
Beseeching release from pagan alarms,
Only to wake with a start?
Now that you know they are passing your door,
Preferring an idol's parade much more,
What does it do to your heart?

You are so earnestly giving the Word,
But listening ears seem not to have heard
No matter how much you repeat;
Strong in the grip of tradition, they sit,
Almost defying you ever to fit
Your shoes on their mental feet.

Patience, my brother, before you will learn
Where the silent ache and the anguish turn
To an unknown god to pray;
Bringing the sheaves from the harvest will wait
On sowing and growing at God's own rate,
A thousand years or a day.

As sure as there's sin in old Adam's breed,
So certain is it that you'll find a lead
Into the devil's domain;
Keep on believing that He who has won
Your full allegiance has also begun
Seeking the lost who remain.

—David B. Woodward.

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